

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2005

Contact:

Anne Johnson, Director of Communications, (202) 523-3240, ext. 27

WASHINGTON - Please join the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) for an on-the-record briefing on Uzbek policies toward religion and the current status of religious freedom in Uzbekistan. The briefing will feature two leading human rights experts on Uzbekistan: Vitaly Ponomarev, director of the Central Asian Program at the Moscow-based Memorial Human Rights Center, and Alisher Ergashev, a well-known human rights lawyer who has just completed a report on Uzbekistan's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

WHO: Vitaly Ponomarev, a leading Russian human rights expert on Central Asia, is director of the Central Asian Program at the Memorial Human Rights Center in Moscow. Ponomarev has written several books and articles on Central Asia and has compiled the most comprehensive list of political and religious prisoners in Uzbekistan.

Alisher Ergashev, a well-known human rights lawyer and a member of the Legal Aid Society, has just completed a detailed alternative report on Uzbekistan's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which he will present to the UN Human Rights Committee on March 21.

WHEN: Thursday, March 17, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
800 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 790
Washington, D.C. 20002

Please RVSP to Caroline Gobble at: cgobble@uscirf.gov or (202) 523-3240, ext. 24.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Preeta D. Bansal ,
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